



Idaho Education Network Program Resource Advisory Council (IPRAC)

October 22, 2009, Meeting Minutes

(approved by Council, December 8, 2009)

The October 22, 2009 meeting of the IEN Program Resource Advisory Council was held in the Barbara Morgan Conference Room of the Len B. Jordan Building, 650 West State Street, Boise, Idaho.

ATTENDANCE

Members/Designate(s) Present:

Tom Luna, (Chair) Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dept. of Education
Stephen Adkison, Associate VP Academic Programming and Review, Idaho State University (phone)
Sen. Shawn Keough (phone)
Rep. Wendy Jaquet
Donna Hutchison, Idaho Digital Learning Academy
John Miller, Dean of Off Campus Instruction, College of Southern Idaho (phone)
Jim Reed, Superintendent, Weiser School District
Jerry Reininger, Director of Information Systems, Meridian School District
Alicia Ritter, President, Ritter Consulting – Strategic Communication
Shelly Sayer, VP of Finance, Premier Technology Inc. (phone)

Designates

Rodney Blaylock, alternate for Charles Shackett, Bonneville Jt. School District
Allen Schmoock, alternate for Dene Thomas, Lewis-Clark State College

Others Present:

Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO	Jerry Piper, Cambridge Telephone Co.
Brady Kraft, IEN	Jim Schmit
Garry Lough, IEN	Joel Strickler, Qwest
Teresa Luna, Dept. of Administration	Melissa Vandenberg, Dept. of Administration
Jodi McCrosky, Qwest	Troy Wheeler, State Dept. of Education
Keith Murphy, Qwest	Greg Zickau, Office of the CIO
Gayle Nelson, ENA	

Call to Order

Superintendent Luna, Chairman, welcomed members and guests present and called the meeting to order.

Introduction of new council member

Brent Stacey is a recent addition to the council. Mr Stacey is the CIO for the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and plans to be an active member of the council, although he was unable to attend on this occasion.

Approval of the agenda

The Chair sought the approval of the agenda, given that it was updated within 48 hours prior to the meeting (the Executive Session was moved to the bottom of the agenda, prior to adjournment). No objections were raised.

Approval of August 18, 2009 Minutes

MOTION: Jim Reed moved and Donna Hutchison seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on August 18, 2009; the motion passed unanimously.

Updates

COMMUNICATIONS

Garry Lough outlined the statewide meetings and webinars in which he had participated, including a seismograph demonstration at Jerome High School that was shared over the IEN with Weiser and Shoshone high schools, and also attended by Governor Otter (article in Magic Valley Times News: http://www.magicvalley.com/news/local/community/article_177ae280-8bdf-5196-bebf-f0c1f432ba50.html). On another occasion, Superintendent Luna and Mr Lough observed a math collaboration involving Eagle and Rocky Mountain high schools. An IEN newsletter will be published soon, with assistance from ENA. The monthly newsletter will be emailed to all superintendents, principals and technology directors to keep them informed.

CURRICULUM

Mr Lough shared a selection of course options, though this was not the limit of what is available. Mr Lough complimented the efforts of Weiser and Emmett districts, and the leadership of the respective superintendents and principals, for bringing about the sharing of content this early on in the project. Because the IEN project is “consumer-centric”, an issue from the beginning has been the provision of a mechanism that allows for easier collaboration, and for educational institutions to take on the responsibility of providing and managing the availability of content. The IEN is working with the Joint Applications Development Group, the State Department of Education and the Office of the CIO to develop a strategy for facilitating the growth in demand. A mechanism should be in place within 90 days.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Brady Kraft shared a high level overview of the implementation of phases 1a, 1b and 1c. Mr Kraft spoke about implementation in regards to bandwidth versus VTC to reflect not only those schools that are connected, but those that are actually involved in the IEN. Twelve schools were scheduled for Phase 1a, six of these were connected quickly, the connection for the other six could be complete by the end of the week.

Ten schools in phase 1b have issues that could delay connection beyond the end of December and consideration has therefore been given to 1c schools, in the same regions and with no connection issues, that could be brought forward into 1b. In this way the goal of connecting 34 schools in 1b can still be attained. The first 51 schools that are being worked, represents 15,979 high school students. The bandwidth for these schools prior to the IEN was 189Mbs, post IEN the bandwidth will be 583Mbs – an increase of 309%.

It is appreciated that any schools expected to be connected before September 2010, need to be informed before March so that they have sufficient time to prepare course plans.

Implementation is currently ahead of the planned timeframe with 50 schools expected to be connected before the end of the year. There are already about 360 credits being received, over 3,000 dual credit hours being taken and 111 students earning credits solely through video conferencing.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Jerry Reininger advised the Council of a new Technical Committee member, Chris Gibson, who is the Technology Director for Jerome School District. The committee is focusing on the timeline for implementation and the need for 1c schools to know when they will be connected. At the last meeting (October 14th), Matt Hultman from Tandberg reported on the imminent acquisition of Tandberg by CISCO. This endorses the IEN’s decision to use a Tandberg model of VTC system. The committee has introduced “rumor busters” onto the agenda to dispel any myths that might arise around the IEN. The first rumor to be quelled is the suggestion that schools will have to

pay for the maintenance of their VTC systems beyond the first year. The truth is that the systems are being purchased with three years of maintenance built in and the IEN will pay for maintenance beyond that. This and other information can be shared very quickly by Brady Kraft through Tech Talk, as well as through the IEN website which includes an FAQ section.

QWEST

Joel Strickler reported that two thirds of the 1a and 1b schools will be completely connected by the end of December – that involves, to date, about 25,000ft of community-based fiber having been laid. The remaining third is on schedule for completion in January 2010 and will double the amount of fiber that is projected for the first two thirds. There have been well-documented gaps regarding infrastructure in rural Idaho, so part of the effort has been to correct that and, consequently, tens of thousands of dollars of infrastructure, outside of the last mile of community fiber, has been invested by Qwest and independent providers. The infrastructure being implemented is “future proof”, meaning there is room for expansion in future years. There are places in the state where winter conditions will make it impossible for fiber to be laid, so every effort is being made to get as much as possible done beforehand.

ENA

Gayle Nelson reminded the Council that ENA’s role is primarily outreach and customer support, whether it be pre or post connection to the IEN. ENA has been meeting onsite with schools to assist them with planning and considering their existing networks to make sure they receive the right solution. They have met with all of the 1a schools, almost all of the 1b schools, and have started with the 1c list. Early on there had been some hesitancy, but the excitement is building and districts are wanting to know when they will be connected. ENA also attends regional technology meetings and helps to dispel any rumors, provide updates and keep the momentum going. There has been a lot of positive feedback and referrals from the districts already connected. As part of the outreach efforts, ENA is sponsoring an IEN booth at the School Board Association (November 11-13) which will be available to all IEN partners, such as Qwest and Tandberg. ENA is also sponsoring a dessert reception.

ENA is starting the annual process of assembling E-Rate packets of information. Once these have been reviewed with the Office of the CIO (OCIO), ENA will meet with each of the school districts to assist them with planning and increasing their funding where possible. The E-Rate filing deadline is early February and is very valuable for maximizing dollars in general. Supt. Luna noted that the State Department of Education had deployed software a year or so ago making it possible to identify students who qualify for free and reduced lunches. The number of qualifying students has since increased by 200%.

Strategic Measurements Committee

The committee has developed a draft strategic measurements document that provides a sound foundation on which to build. Consideration has been given to what would constitute defensible measures to demonstrate the success of the IEN. The committee will give further consideration to the criteria for success with actual figures to aim towards; the pre and post comparison of state assessments; qualitative measurements; data ownership; the ease with which districts can provide information; customer satisfaction; and whether a change in numbers reflects a change in usage rather than population size.

Expectations for School Districts

An updated draft of the “MOU” was shared. Gayle Nelson commented that the more mature organizations and programs had less stringent MOUs, which was found to be the right approach. The council discussed how to find a balance in receiving a degree of commitment from the school districts without being too rigorous. The demand is currently so great that resistant districts will be pushed further back in the timeline, allowing other, more enthusiastic districts to be connected sooner.

What other states are doing

Gayle Nelson presented findings from research involving several states. ENA selected 9 states in particular for further research from a report entitled *"Taking the Wraps off Videoconferencing in the U.S. Classroom"* (April 2009 update from a report dated 2006) – North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Utah, Texas, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Alabama and Arkansas. Three of these (Wyoming, Utah and South Dakota) were identified as having purchased the VTC equipment which was then deployed in the school districts. Arkansas and Alabama had used state funds that were then distributed as grants to the school districts and the districts had then purchased the equipment. There has been major legislative supportive for efforts where a state purchased the equipment or provided funds to the districts to do so. The majority of the statewide projects initially targeted high schools, as that is where the largest equity in education gaps exist.

All state-funded projects have MOUs but they take different forms: in grant distribution models, the grant application itself becomes an MOU. Others have agreements presented to the districts that have to be signed. Common elements of MOUs include:

- designated roles and responsibilities
- commitment to provide adequate facilities
- agreement to provide a trained facilitator/proctor
- commitment to train teachers and send/receive courses.

In the case of Nebraska, the schools purchase the equipment based on state standards, they then apply for grants and, in exchange for the funding, the schools agree to send or receive one videoconferencing course in a certain period and if they do not, the grant money has to be returned.

Feedback from other states included the importance of proper planning, collaboration and outreach up front, which is the approach that Idaho is taking. Also, the establishing of equipment standards will alleviate a lot of issues, again Idaho has already taken this approach. It was suggested that a Frequently Asked Questions document be developed for inclusion with the readiness package.

Executive Session under 67-2345 (1) (f)

MOTION: Alicia Ritter moved and Donna Hutchison seconded a motion to move to Executive Session under 67-2345 (1) (f) – to communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated. The motion carried with 12 in favor and no objections.

Council moved out of Executive Session and went back on the record.

Adjournment

MOTION: Rep Jaquet moved and Allen Schmooch seconded a motion to adjourn; there were no objections and the Council adjourned until its next scheduled meeting of November 10, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,



Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO